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Offenses against the native regulations, which control such aspects of communal life as village planning, sanitation, house building, and gardening, are tried in special district and provincial courts for natives only. The district court for natives has jurisdiction over natives of a district and is presided over by a native stipendiary magistrate. Petty offenses against native regulations are tried in it.[23] Appeal from the district court may be made to the provincial court for natives. This court has jurisdiction over a magisterial province. The provincial court is composed of the district commissioner of the province sitting with the native stipendiary magistrate, and has minor criminal and civil powers over the natives and can hear petitions for divorce from natives.[24] Appeal from the native provincial court may be made to the supreme court of the colony.

These native courts are supplements to the administration of justice in the provinces. Throughout the colony justice is administrated by means of a supreme court and various district courts of summary jurisdiction.[25]

Justice in the colony is enforced by the constabulary which consists of over two hundred police officers divided into twenty-six detachments.[26] None of this force is stationed in southern Lau. Natives sentenced to serve a jail term are taken from the southern islands to the jail at Lakemba. A

[23] The district court deals with offenses involving a maximum penalty of 40 shillings or imprisonment for two months, and in civil matters up to the value of 80 shillings.

[24] The actual decision in divorce cases is, however, made by the chief justice of the colony.

[25] The supreme court is presided over by the chief justice. It has the same jurisdiction as that of His Majesty's high court of justice in England. It is also a court of equity and court of probate. The supreme court has four sessions per year in Suva and also a circuit. Appeal may be made in certain cases to the judicial committee of the privy council.

The district courts of summary jurisdiction, both criminal and civil, are presided over by the district commissioner. On the criminal side he has the power to inflict a maximum penalty of six months' imprisonment, and on the civil side to deal with claims of value less than £50.

[26] In 1936 the constabulary was composed of 18 Europeans, 88 Indians, and 111 Fijians. (*Annual Report*, Fiji, 1936, p. 56.)

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696 554 term has not the stigma attached to it one might expect, however. For instance, Malakai of Tokalau was the village schoolmaster and had an acceptable standing in the community in spite of the fact that he had served a jail term for having stolen money while holding the position of *mbuli Kambara.*

691 626 Practically all court cases in Lau involving natives are handled by the district and provincial courts for natives only. Native district courts are held in preparation for the native provincial circuit court which sits on each island every two or three years. Most of the cases are either truancy or theft. There is a reluctance, however, on the part of the natives to submit cases to the government courts. Public opinion works two ways. It not only serves as a powerful force to prevent breaches of the social code, but it prevents many petty offenses from reaching the courtroom. In southern Lau there is a tendency to settle as many cases as possible out of court. This is possible only because of the strong sense of clan and communal loyalty. A man tries to protect his relatives, especially the members of his clan. This is illustrated by the following case.

691 673 602 One day Ketei, the industrious village headman of Tokalau, came to us with an earnest face. Twenty baskets of sweet potatoes had been taken without permission from his garden in the last three days. This represented the loss of about ten days' food supply for his family. Ketei said he would not have minded the loss, if the person who took them had only asked his permission. We asked if he knew who had taken them. He said he did not. He would not confide even his suspicions to us, but the gossip of the village was that Ramoko of Undu, Ketei's brother-in-law, had taken the sweet potatoes. Ramoko was known as the laziest man in Undu. At the slightest excuse, such as the new year's celebration (introduced in recent times), he moved with his wife and three children to live for two or three weeks with Ketei, his industrious brother-in-law, who always had plenty to eat as a result of hard and persistent